



California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

Consumer Advisory

June 4, 2003

Media Contact: PUC Press Office, 415.703.1366, news@cpuc.ca.gov

PUC OFFERS RAIL SAFETY TIPS FOR NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

Did you know that according to the National Center for Health Statistics, accidents by trains and motor vehicles rank among the top five leading causes of death in the United States? The startling fact is that each year more than 1,000 people die or are severely injured by being on or near railroad tracks.

June is National Safety Month, and the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) wants you to be railroad-ready and offers the following safety tips:

- **Never race a train to the crossing.** The ramifications of losing – or even tying – will make you another deadly statistic.
- **Never drive around crossing gates that are lowered or through a signal that is flashing.** Although the crossing gates may not be working, or the signal may be on the blink, don't take that risk – a train may be on its way. And, if you're caught doing so, be prepared to pay a hefty fine.
- **Objects in mirror are closer than they appear.** The caution printed on cars' side-view mirrors holds a lot of credence. The train you spot on the horizon is actually closer than you think it is. If you see a train approaching, simply wait for it to pass before you cross the tracks.
- **Truth in science.** Since trains travel at high speeds, they cannot stop on a dime due to momentum. For example, if a train is traveling at about 55 mph, it will need *at least* a mile to stop
- **Stay off the tracks.** Never walk on the tracks. If your car happens to stall on a crossing, immediately evacuate and call your local law enforcement agency.
- **If you're ever in doubt about how to proceed, always remember the golden rule of thumb: IT'S BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY.**

For more information about the PUC and railroad safety, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

###